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ABSTRACT

Results are presented of an experiment involving the reactions toward accented speakers by immigrated native and near-native proficient English speakers from the same Spanish-speaking ethnolinguistic background. It was hypothesized that: (1) the negative reactions of listeners reflected an observable association with a geographic location such as the host society, neighborhood, or even a street; and (2) Spanish speakers from other countries posed a threat to their language counterparts from other Latin American origins, particularly those ensconced within majority concentrations. It was thought that English proficient Hispanic subjects from the sparsely represented areas would react less negatively toward accented speakers than those from highly represented ones. A total of 84 subjects with an average age of 25 were studied. Among the 28 variables were gender, marital status, educational levels, and ethnicity of subjects as well as spouses. A number of dependent variables appeared to show significant interrelationships; e.g., opinions by Mexican and Puerto Rican subjects from majority neighborhoods about the socioeconomic status of different ethnic origin limited-English-proficient (LEP) speakers significantly correlated with expressions of trust, comfort, and judgments. Overall, the findings from the study support the existence of a negative affect arousal mechanism through observations regarding the devaluation of speakers from other Spanish ethnic origins. Additional research is warranted to explore the characteristics associated with negative affect arousal and resulting behaviors within other ethnolinguistic groups. Contains 10 references. (LB)

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NEGATIVE AFFECT AROUSAL REACTIONS FROM MEXICAN

AND

PUERTO RICAN RESPONDENTS

Prepared For The
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And
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February, 1991

By

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INTRODUCTION:

Various studies have explored relationships of negative affect arousal, and the social evaluation of limited English proficient students. Sebastian, Ryan, et al. (1980), Ryan and Carranza (1975), Seidner (1982, 1984), as well as Clore and Byrne (1974), among others noted the devaluation of perceived accented speakers by individuals who exhibited negative affect arousal in communication situations. Essentially, these studies focused upon patterns and characteristics of the phenomenon displayed by predominantly native English listeners. Findings suggested that these participants reflected strong solidarity with the host ethnolinguistic group, social class identification, and social distance from the limited English speakers. Similar outcomes were observed with native English speakers origin toward limited English proficient Chinese and Vietnamese subjects. (Seidner and Balasubramonian, 1987).[1]

This paper presents the results of an experiment involving the reactions toward accented speakers by immigrated native and near-native proficient English speakers from the same Spanish -speaking ethnolinguistic group. The original hypotheses suggested that the negative reactions of listeners toward accented speakers of the same group would reflect an observable association with a geographic location such as the host society, neighborhood, or even a street. It was further suggested that Spanish speakers from other countries would pose a threat to their lan-

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guage counterparts from other Latin American origins, particularly to those ensconced within majority concentrations. Other researchers such as Elias and Scotson (1965), found that the in-group members were threatened with the emergence of new arrivals. If the hypothesis held true, especially for subjects from two representative countries of this same language group, certain premises might be advanced pertaining to perceived unilateral Hispanic stereotyping. In order to test this hypothesis, matched groups were selected from separate predominantly sparse representative geographic areas. It was thought that English proficient Hispanic subjects from the sparsely represented areas would react less negatively toward accented speakers than those from highly represented ones. Hispanic subjects were divided according to Puerto Rican, and Mexican Hispanic populations. Puerto Rican and Mexican subjects were further subdivided into two majority, and two minority groups selected from their own predominant ethnic neighborhood, as well as their counterpart concentration.

The paper summarizes the results of the study, and suggests a number of ramifications for further research. Twenty-eight variables were included in the full investigation. A number of these factors allowed for an examination of traditional explanations, in reference to prior studies of the negative affect arousal hypothesis. For example, it is interesting to note that the responding subjects in most of these studies were college-age students. Van Dijk in his study (1987), posed the

argument that younger people are better educated, and tend to have more natural contact with their ethnic peers resulting in lower levels of prejudicial stereotyping than their adult counterparts. Subject selection was not confined to traditional college-age students found in other studies. Other variables included gender, marital status, educational levels, and ethnicity of subjects as well as spouses, among other factors. Further discussion pertaining to the research methodology is summarized in the next section.

METHODOLOGY:

A total of eighty four subjects in four cluster samples, were selected from a total of four hundred and forty actual participants. Group stratification by way of ethnicity, and geographic concentration permitted both random and systematic sampling applications. Further alternating selection by gender in proportion to the population decreased the probable sampling error ($p(x)<.001$; $se=.01$). Subjects in the four groups were assigned to two conditions in a language laboratory with separate stations. Two limited English speakers from both representative Hispanic groups of equivalent language proficiency voluntarily taped repeated timed descriptions of common objects. Unlike previous studies, none of the tapes were punctuated with white noise. If substantial differences existed through perceived pri-

mary language interference from both background speakers, the distinctions would potentially serve as a treatment to test various aspects of negative affect arousal. Three inter-raters produced significant Fisher Z-Transformation reliability coefficients for all subjects' English, and Spanish proficiency (.92, P<.001; .88, p<.01). After the process, the subjects completed a field-tested scaled attitudinal questionnaire. It was hypothesized that the Puerto Rican and Mexican respondents from majority neighborhoods would exhibit significant negative affect arousal toward opposite ethnic-orgin limited English proficient speakers. In comparison, responses toward limited English speakers of their own ethnic origin would be modified, as shown by subjects judgments about speakers' characteristics and effectiveness. Conversely, no significant differences were anticipated toward accented speakers from either ethnolinguistic group, by Mexican and Puerto Rican subjects from respective neighborhoods with minority concentrations. Multivariate analysis applications were employed, in order to determine potential patterns of interrelationships among variables from various vantage points (e.g., phi and tetrachoric correlations for classes of dichotomous variables). Varimax rotation of variables was applied to multiple regression analyses. Results of these applications are discussed in the next section of this paper.

RESULTS:

Data from statistical analyses were analyzed by various total and subgroups. Additional analyses of covariance were run for factors such as age, gender, and ethnicity as an additional check of the randomization processes. No significant differences were observed with the covariates. The mean age of all respondents was approximately twenty-five and a half years. An average of close to two years of college-level education, within a small standard deviation characterized the total responding population. The majority of respondents claimed Spanish as their home language, followed by a combination of Spanish and English. The singular utilization of Spanish as the home language, appeared to be more significant in responses of Puerto Rican minority neighborhood respondents ($r=.569$, $p<.001$). The majority of all respondents displayed significant distance from English as the singular home language ($r=.613$, $p<.01$). The least distance was exhibited by majority neighborhood respondents, and the most by those from minority neighborhoods. Most respondents were single, or separated. No significant distinctions in actual marital status was discernible among groups. (See Tables 1-5, for a more detailed descriptive statistical breakdown).

A number of dependent variables appeared to show significant interrelationships. Opinions by Mexican and Puerto Rican subjects from majority neighborhoods about the socioeconomic status of

different ethnic origin limited proficient speakers significantly correlated with expressions of trust ($r=.679$, $p<.001$), comfort with the individual moving in their neighborhood ($r=.73$, $p<.01$), and judgments regarding ease of understanding the tape-recorded description ($r=.622$, $p<.01$). Education levels of speakers from other origins were also judged by all majority neighborhood subjects to be somewhat lower than limited English proficient speakers from their own ethnolinguistic groups. There was a high interrelationship between the consistency of higher educational characterizations for the individuals from respondents' own groups and the lower educational characterizations for opposing limited English proficient speakers ($r=.894$; $p<.01$). Once again, the home language was instrumental in the opinions of majority neighborhood respondents toward speakers from other ethnic origins. The level of comfort in having these speakers in the respondents' neighborhood rested in part, upon the nature of the home language ($r=.743$, $p<.01$). A consistent pattern emerged where the majority neighborhood respondents attributed speakers from their own ethnolinguistic groups with higher socioeconomic, and comfort levels than with speakers from other ethnic origins ($F=73.4404$, $df=4$, $p<0001$).

When divided into component Mexican and Puerto Rican majority groups, multiple regression analyses pointed to some differences in significant features with speculations regarding the class of speakers from other ethnic origins as the dependent

variable (see tables 6-7). Educational levels, with English language proficiency emerged as significant independent variables for the Mexican majority respondents in this instance ($F=3.3088$, $p=<.0453$), while English and Spanish language proficiency, along with the home language were important features to Puerto Rican majority respondents ($F=3.6154$, $p<.0348$). Repeated factor analyses of the combined majority groups, in addition to the minority neighborhood concentrations, were also conducted with Varimax rotation of variables. An Eigenvalue summary of select variables indicated that English language proficiency, along with educational levels of respondents, and the nature of the home language accounted for more than seventy-three percent of the variance for combined neighborhood groups (table 8). The scope of this paper prevents a more detailed exposition of the actual statistical analyses, which will be presented in a forthcoming monograph. Interpretations of the general data are presented in the following discussion.

DISCUSSION:

The analyses of data appeared to bear out a number of hypotheses. Discernible negative reactions toward limited English proficient speakers of other ethnolinguistic origins emerged in the judgments by majority neighborhood respondents. A critical distinction of language, between the two representative limited

English proficient samples seemed to influence the choices of Puerto Rican and Mexican groups. This difference essentially served the same function as white noise, and triggered the negative affect process in majority respondents. Here again, significant relationships were observed between the lack of ease in understanding other ethnic origin speakers, and feelings of avoidance ($r=.622$, $p<.01$), as well as expressed lack of trust for the individuals ($r=.474$, $p<.05$). Other data supported the hypothesis that Spanish speakers from other countries would threaten majority group respondents. Avoidance of speakers from other countries significantly related to lower levels of trust by majority neighborhood respondents ($r=.48$, $p<.01$). Conversely, minority neighborhood respondents showed little difference in their acceptance patterns of speakers from either Spanish ethnic origin ($r=.701$, $p<.01$), the ease of understanding ($r=.587$, $p<.01$), or the expressed effectiveness of either individual ($r=.747$, $p<.01$). Overall, the data was consistent with a number of findings by Van Dijk (1987), and Banton (1983), among others. Majority neighborhood respondents' negative affect arousal reflected the cohesiveness of the group, and rejection of outsider intrusions. This behavior was reminiscent of the viral theory of social contagion, and resultant reactions to perceived threats to some collectively shared value. In this instance, the English language proficiency of majority neighborhood respondents, together with the language of origin, and the home language were

instrumental factors in determining social distance from other ethnic origin limited English proficient speakers. Minority neighborhood respondents showed less of a social distance in their responses than those from majority neighborhoods. It was thought that some degree of distance by minority neighborhood respondents toward other Spanish origin limited English speakers would be evident. This data supported the hypothesis, and the contention that the cohesiveness would be somewhat less in an environment predominantly representative of Spanish speakers from the other ethnic origin. Additional studies are needed to test the generalization of this premise.

As anticipated, the ethnicity of the spouse significantly related to the nature of the home language utilized in all neighborhood settings. Interestingly, female spouses of respondents from Puerto Rican majority neighborhoods displayed a higher degree of educational mobility than their counterparts from other areas. Their level of education seemed to have some bearing on respondents' opinions about the effectiveness of speakers' from their own ethnicity ($r=.466$, $P<.01$), and from other groups ($r=.526$, $p<.01$). It is suggested that the higher education levels reinforced respondents' feelings of solidarity with speakers from the same ethnic origin, as well as distance from other speakers. More research is needed to either confirm, or refute the validity of this premise.

Overall, the findings from the study support the existence of a negative affect arousal mechanism through observations

regarding the devaluation of speakers from other Spanish ethnic origins. Sufficient evidence by way of the literature in the field lends additional credence to the role of language as a triggering mechanism for negative affect arousal to occur. Essentially, the characterization of other Spanish ethnic origin speakers infers the development of a standard language within the respective majority group, and the distances experienced through linguistic as well as cultural value associations. Additional research is warranted to explore the characteristics associated with negative affect arousal and resulting behaviors within other ethnolinguistic groups.

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1. These findings are somewhat contrary to Apostle, Glock, et. al., 1983.

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TABLES

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL PROFILE
ALL VARIABLES (N=84)

VAR NAME	SIZE	MEAN	SAMPLE STD DEV	SAMPLE VARIANCE	COEF. OF VARIATION
AGE	84	27.35714	5.94481	35.34079	.2173
GENDER	84	1.5	.503	.25301	.33534
EDLEVL	84	1.89286	.82166	.67513	.43409
EMPLOY	84	1.52381	.66724	.44521	.43788
ENGLP	84	1.46429	.50172	.25172	.34264
SPANLP	84	1.17857	.38529	.14845	.32692
MARITL	84	1.41667	.62495	.39056	.44114
CHLDRN	84	2.14286	4.03342	16.2685	1.88226
MNAGE	84	38.94047	34.52897	1192.25	.88671
SPOUSE	84	18.53571	15.47049	239.3361	.83463
SPSEED	84	2.0119	1.68261	2.83118	.83633
SPSETH	84	.88095	.82732	.68445	.93912
HOMELG	84	1.64286	.72216	.52151	.43958
INCOME	84	3.65476	.59098	.34925	.1617
SPKRST	84	2.30952	.46507	.21629	.20137
SPKRED	84	3.82143	.38529	.14845	.10082
SPKSOL	84	1.55952	.6277	.394	.40249
TRUST	84	1.5	.68548	.46988	.45699
EASE	84	2.14286	.49437	.24441	.23071
EFFECT	84	3.32143	.49481	.24484	.14897
SPKST2	84	2.58333	.49597	.24598	.19199
SPKED2	84	4.2619	.66076	.4366	.15504
SPSOL2	84	2.07143	.77282	.59725	.37308
TRUST2	84	2.0119	.66756	.44564	.33181
EASE2	84	2.71429	.6507	.42341	.23973
EFFCT2	84	3.7381	.76235	.58118	.20394
GEOGRP	84	2.45238	1.12373	1.26277	.45822
ETHNCT	84	2.21428	1.0874	1.18245	.49109

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISICAL PROFILE
MAJORITY NEIGHBORHOOD MEXICAN RESPONDENDENTS (N=21)

VAR NAME	SIZE	MEAN	SAMPLE STD DEV	SAMPLE VARIANCE	COEF. OF VARIATION
AGE	21	27.52381	5.95499	35.46191	.21636
GENDER	21	1.47619	.51177	.2619	.34668
EDLEVL	21	1.66667	.79582	.63333	.47749
EMPLOY	21	1.52381	.67964	.4619	.44601
ENGLP	21	1.47619	.51177	.2619	.34668
SPANLP	21	1.09524	.30079	.09048	.27464
MARITL	21	1.42857	.67612	.45714	.47329
CHLDRN	21	1.76191	1.44585	2.09048	.82062
MNAGE	21	36.80953	30.99939	960.9622	.84216
SPOUSE	21	17.57143	15.30546	234.2571	.87104
SPSEED	21	1.90476	1.7293	2.99048	.90788
SPSETH	21	1	.94868	.9	.94868
HOMELG	21	1.66667	.57735	.33333	.34641
INCOME	21	3.85714	.65465	.42857	.16973
SPKRST	21	2.33333	.48305	.23333	.20702
SPKRED	21	3.76191	.43644	.19048	.11601
SPKSOL	21	1.38095	.49761	.24762	.36034
TRUST	21	1.33333	.48305	.23333	.36228
EASE	21	2.04762	.38421	.14762	.18764
EFFECT	21	3.57143	.50709	.25714	.14199
SPKST2	21	2.76191	.43644	.19048	.15802
SPKED2	21	4.80952	.40237	.1619	.08366
SPSOL2	21	2.42857	.67612	.45714	.2784
TRUST2	21	2.14286	.47809	.22857	.22311
EASE2	21	3	.63246	.4	.21082
EFFCT2	21	4.38095	.58959	.34762	.13458
GEOGRP	21	1	0	0	0
ETHNCT	21	1	0	0	0

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL PROFILE
MINORITY NEIGHBORHOOD MEXICAN RESPONDENTS (N=21)

VAR NAME	SIZE	MEAN	SAMPLE STD DEV	SAMPLE VARIANCE	COEF. OF VARIATION
AGE	21	26.28572	5.2834	27.91429	.201
GENDER	21	1.47619	.51177	.2619	.34668
EDLEVL	21	2.14286	.79282	.62857	.36998
EMPLOY	21	1.42857	.74642	.55714	.52249
ENGLP	21	1.38095	.49761	.24762	.36034
SPANLP	21	1.28571	.46291	.21429	.36004
MARITL	21	1.47619	.60159	.3619	.40753
CHLDRN	21	3.09524	7.67401	58.89048	2.4793
MNAGE	21	32.90476	32.74126	1071.99	.99503
SPOUSE	21	18.04762	15.63802	244.5477	.86649
SPSEED	21	2	1.73205	3	.86603
SPSETH	21	.7619	.70034	.49048	.9192
HOMELG	21	1.71429	.48515	.71429	.49301
INCOME	21	3.71429	.46291	.21429	.12463
SPKRST	21	2.38095	.49761	.24762	.209
SPKRED	21	3.85714	.35857	.12857	.09296
SPKSOL	21	1.66667	.65828	.43333	.39497
TRUST	21	1.76191	.76842	.59048	.43613
EASE	21	2.33333	.48305	.23333	.20702
EFFECT	21	3.14286	.47809	.22857	.15212
SPKST2	21	2.47619	.51177	.2619	.20667
SPKED2	21	3.76191	.53896	.29048	.14327
SPSOL2	21	1.66667	.65828	.43333	.39497
TRUST2	21	1.76191	.62488	.39048	.35466
EASE2	21	2.42857	.59761	.35714	.24608
EFFCT2	21	3.19048	.40237	.1619	.12612
GEOGRP	21	2	0	0	0
ETHNCT	21	2	0	0	0

TABLE 4

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL PROFILE

MAJORITY NEIGHBORHOOD PUERTO RICAN RESPONDENTS (N=23)

VAR NAME	SIZE	MEAN	SAMPLE STD DEV	SAMPLE VARIANCE	COEF. OF VARIATION
AGE	21	27.28572	6.07571	36.91429	.22267
GENDER	21	1.52381	.51177	.2619	.33585
EDLEVL	21	1.76191	.83095	.69048	.47162
EMPLOY	21	1.57143	.59761	.35714	.3803
ENGLP	21	1.47619	.51177	.2619	.34668
SPANLP	21	1.14286	.35857	.12857	.31375
MARITL	21	1.33333	.57735	.33333	.43301
CHLDRN	21	1.90476	1.6095	2.59048	.84499
MNAGE	21	45.33333	38.4465	1478.133	.84809
SPOUSE	21	19.33333	14.9811	224.4334	.77488
SPSEED	21	2.19048	1.6006	2.5619	.73071
SPSETH	21	1	.89443	.8	.89443
HOMELG	21	1.61905	.66904	.44762	.41323
INCOME	21	3.57143	.67612	.45714	.18931
SPKRST	21	2.19048	.40237	.1619	.18369
SPKRED	21	3.85714	.35857	.12857	.09296
SPKSOL	21	1.42857	.50709	.25714	.35496
TRUST	21	1.19048	.40237	.1619	.33799
EASE	21	1.90476	.53896	.29048	.28295
EFFECT	21	3.47619	.51177	.2619	.14722
SPKST2	21	2.76191	.43644	.19048	.15802
SPKED2	21	4.66667	.48305	.23333	.10351
SPSOL2	21	2.42857	.67612	.45714	.2784
TRUST2	21	2.38095	.49761	.24762	.209
EASE2	21	2.95238	.49761	.24762	.16855
EFFCT2	21	4.28572	.56061	.31429	.13081
GEOGRP	21	3	0	0	0
ETHNCT	21	2.04762	.21822	.04762	.10657

TABLE 5
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL PROFILE
MINORITY NEIGHBORHOOD PUERTO RICAN RESPONDENTS

VAR NAME	SIZE	MEAN	SAMPLE STD DEV	SAMPLE VARIANCE	COEF. OF VARIATION
AGE	21	28.33333	6.64329	44.13334	.23447
GENDER	21	1.52381	.51177	.2619	.33585
EDLEVL	21	2	.83666	.7	.41833
EMPLOY	21	1.57143	.67612	.45714	.43026
ENGLP	21	1.52381	.51177	.2619	.33585
SPANLP	21	1.19048	.40237	.1619	.33799
MARITL	21	1.42857	.67612	.45714	.47329
CHLDRN	21	1.80952	1.63153	2.6619	.90164
MNAGE	21	40.71429	36.7085	1347.514	.90161
SPOUSE	21	19.19047	16.9606	287.662	.8838
SPSEED	21	1.95238	1.77415	3.14762	.90871
SPSETH	21	.7619	.76842	.59048	1.00856
HOMELG	21	1.57143	.81064	.65714	.51586
INCOME	21	3.47619	.51177	.2619	.14722
SPKRST	21	2.33333	.48305	.23333	.20702
SPKRED	21	3.80952	.40237	.1619	.10562
SPKSOL	21	1.76191	.76842	.59048	.43613
TRUST	21	1.71429	.84515	.71429	.49301
EASE	21	2.28571	.46291	.21429	.20252
EFFECT	21	3.09524	.30079	.09048	.09718
SPKST2	21	2.33333	.48305	.23333	.20702
SPKED2	21	3.80952	.40237	.1619	.10562
SPSOL2	21	1.76191	.76842	.59048	.43613
TRUST2	21	1.76191	.83095	.69048	.47162
EASE2	21	2.47619	.67964	.4619	.27447
EFFCT2	21	3.09524	.30079	.09048	.09718
GEOGRP	21	4	0	0	0
ETHNCT	21	4	0	0	0

TABLE 6:
MAJORITY MEXICAN RESPONDENTS
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS WITH SECOND SPEAKER STATUS

STRAIGHT MULTIPLE REGRESSION

CURRENT REGRESSION SUMMARY TABLE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: SPKST2

MULTIPLE R = .6072
STD ERR EST = .3761
F = 3.3088

IND VAR	B COEF	STD ERR(B)	T-VALUE	PROB
EDLEVL	.252302	.108881	2.317222	.0332
ENGLP	.163904	.196288	.835017	.4153
TRUST	.353591	.208518	1.695736	.1082

CONSTANT
1.627993

MULTIPLE CORRELATION SUMMARY

	MULTIPLE R	R-SQUARE
UNADJUSTED	.6072	.3686
ADJUSTED	.5072	.2572

STD ERROR OF ESTIMATE = .3761
SAMPLE SIZE = 21

ANOVA FOR CURRENT REGRESSION

	SUM SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F-RATIO	PROB
REGRESSION	1.404367	3	.468122	3.3088	.0453
RESIDUAL	2.405157	17	.14148		
TOTAL	3.809524	20	.190476		

TABLE 7:
MAJORITY NEIGHBORHOOD PUERTO RICAN RESPONDENTS
MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS WITH SECOND SPEAKER STATUS

STRAIGHT MULTIPLE REGRESSION

CURRENT REGRESSION SUMMARY TABLE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: SPKST2

MULTIPLE R = .6241
STD ERR EST = .3699
F = 3.6154

IND VAR	B COEF	STD ERR(B)	T-VALUE	PROB
ENGLP	.663221	.217453	3.049944	.0072
SPANLP	.752585	.279107	2.696407	.0153
HOMELG	.319055	.155722	2.04888	.0562

CONSTANT
.406203

MULTIPLE CORRELATION SUMMARY

	MULTIPLE R	R-SQUARE
UNADJUSTED	.6241	.3895
ADJUSTED	.5308	.2818

STD ERROR OF ESTIMATE = .3699
SAMPLE SIZE = 21

ANOVA FOR CURRENT REGRESSION

	SUM SQUARES	DF	MEAN SQUARES	F-RATIO	PROB
REGRESSION	1.483823	3	.494608	3.6154	.0348
RESIDUAL	2.325701	17	.136806		
TOTAL	3.809524	20	.190476		

TABLE 8:
MAJORITY NEIGHBORHOOD RESPONDENTS
EIGENVALUE SUMMARY OF SELECT VARIABLES
N=42

--EIGENVALUE SUMMARY REPORT--

FACTOR	EIGENVALUE	PCT OF VAR	CUM PCT
1	2.606763	37.24	37.24
2	1.327509	18.96	56.2
3	1.196366	17.09	73.29